FBI Cleared New Orleans Pilot After Quiz, Warren Aide Says

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By MICHAEL J. BERLIN

A Warren Commission staff member said today that David M. Ferrie, who was found dead yesterday after being named in the New Orleans investigation of a possible plot to kill President Kennedy, "was not involved in any way."

Wesley Liebeler, the counsel who handled the New Orleans end of the Warren Commission inquiry, told the New York Post:

"Ferrie was picked up shortly after the assassination and questioned thoroughly by local officials and the FBI. I remember specifically doing up a substantial stack of FBI reports on Ferrie that we reviewed in order to make our determination.

"It was perfectly clear that he was not involved in any way."

Writing a Book

Liebeler, now a UCLA law professor, is working on a book defending the Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination.

"To the best of my recollection," says Liebeler, "there were two people with Ferrie, and they accounted for his moves on the day of the assassination . . . They were not near Dallas. I don't remember the names of the two, but they're in the commission files."

The FBI reports on Ferrie were not included in the Commission's 26 published volumes of testimony and documents, Liebeler says, "because it was so clear he wasn't involved."

Liebeler says the Commission staff did not doublecheck the FBI inquiries, "aside from some questions I asked" of two witnesses who were called upon by the Commission, primarily to discuss other aspects of Oswald's background.

One of the witnesses was Edward Voebel, who had attended junior high school in New Orleans with Oswald and Ferrie.

Voebel brought Oswald to "two or three meetings" of the school's Civil Air Patrol unit, after which Oswald "lost interest." Ferrie was the captain of that CAP unit, Voebel said

Later that same day ((April 7, 1964) Frederick O'Sullivan, another Oswald classmate and now a member of the New Orleans vice squad, testified.

Liebeler pressed him for a relationship between Oswald and Ferrie in their teenage CAP days, but O'Sullivan could remember none.

When Ferrie was arrested for questioning in 1963, O'Sullivan testified, he and another policeman went out to the airport "where we found Dave Ferrie's airplane. We wanted to check it to see if it was flyable, to see possibly whether he had been flying it lately, with the thought that he may have transported Oswald to Dallas. This isn't my thought. This was brought up to me, but his plane was not in flyable condition.

Finally Liebeler asked:

"You have never had any contact with Ferrie in connection with your activities on the vice squad? Is that correct?"

O'Sullivan's reply, as printed in the Commission record, was:

"No; Ferrie lives or he did live in Jefferson Parish. We have no authority in Jefferson Parish. (Deletion.)"

Today, Liebeler was asked if the Commission had established that Ferrie was a homosexual—if that had been the reason for the deletion.

"There was something of that sort, I remember," said Liebeler.